

## Public Relations as Ex-Officio of PPID: among the Role, Strategy, and Quality of Public Information in Sidoarjo

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### Abstract

This study aims to describe 1) the role of government and public relations strategy in providing quality public information, 2) the quality of public information services, 3) the role and influence of public relations strategy on the quality of public information services in Sidoarjo. This explanatory study used a sample of 103 people with staff of Sidoarjo government as respondents. Analyzing technique used is multiple regressions. The results showed that public relations as an ex-officio of Records and Information Management Officer (PPID) have a role and a good strategy, amounting to 79.18% and 80.3%. The available and informed public information are not optimal, i.e. 1) regular information 35.8%; 2) immediate information 39.8%; 3) anytime information 39.6%, and 4) requested information of 41.3 %. The quality of information disseminated to the public is categorized as fairly good (65.5%). The role and strategy used by public relations as ex-officio PPID affect the quality of public information by 71%. The influence either simultaneously or partial, shows significant value.

**Keywords:** ex-officio PPID, role and strategy, the quality of public information.

### 1. Introduction

A study conducted by ICW (Indonesian Corruption Watch, 2012) about the readiness of public agencies in the implementation of the Freedom of Information Law No.14/2008 explains that effective implementation of this Law is still not optimal. Further studies conducted in five cities, such as Medan, Denpasar, Semarang, Yogyakarta, and Makassar; revealed that the disclosure of information regarding the financial data in the area is hard to get. From 1500 respondents, those who are willing to provide financial information is only 40,83%; related to the institution's profile is 95,5%, and the results of the performance of public agencies is 87,75% (<http://politik.pelitaonline.com/news/2012/05/16>, accessed February 3, 2013).

The same matter was also delivered by Yamin (2010) in an article entitled "suing the closure of public agencies" that obtaining public information was not easy (<http://myaminpancase-tia.wordpress.com>, accessed February 8, 2013). Facts and the data show that public information services in some areas are still low. It is in line with a study conducted by Abadi (2010) stating that public information services in regencies and cities, either face to face (direct) or e-government media, still show poor quality.

Freedom of Information Law No.14/2008 preamble explains that the right to information is a human right and public information disclosure is one of important characteristics of a democratic country that upholds the sovereignty of the people to implement good governance. One thing that should be done by public agency is provide public information that can be obtained by every applicant of public information quickly, timely, with low cost and simple ways to improve management and service of quality information within public agencies.

To implement the Freedom of Information Law No.14/2008 and to meet the demands of transparency and public service that is fast, easy, and inexpensive; Sidoarjo government formed Records and Information Management Officer (PPID) by decree No.14/2012 dated March 27, 2012. PPID is responsible for the storage, documentation, delivery, and service information. Ex-officio, the implementation of PPID information services is helped by government public institutions in Sidoarjo as contained in annex decree No.14/2012 on Management of Information Documentation Working Procedure.

Along with the development of bureaucratic reform and the era of public disclosure, the role of public relations is increasingly important and strategic. As public communicators, government public relations should secure the institution policy, providing services and disseminating information to the public about the institution's policies and work programs. In principle, government public relations is required to set the agenda of policy of agencies to be submitted to and accepted by the public media. (<http://www.setkab.go.id/artikel-6357-.html>, accessed January 30, 2013).

In an effort to develop a relationship with Sidoarjo people more broadly, one of the media used is the website of Sidoarjo government. Theoretically, websites can be used to convey various information activities, agendas, policies, and programs of work to be done by the government to the people quickly, cheaply, and easily. But the facts show that the information is rarely updated by each SKPD. Meanwhile, ex-officio PPID as one of main tasks and functions of public relations is still not optimal. Accessible Sidoarjo government website addresses are [www.sidoarjokab.go.id](http://www.sidoarjokab.go.id) and [PPID.sidoarjo.go.id](http://PPID.sidoarjo.go.id), while the interactive menu which is one of

[www.sidoarjokab.go.id](http://www.sidoarjokab.go.id) domain that allows people to interact with the local government is the P3M (Center for Public Service and Complaints) application built in 2003.

Based on the background of the above-mentioned problems, the author was interested to study the role and strategy of Government Public Relations in Improving the Quality of Public Information in Sidoarjo . The formulation of the problem in this research is : How are Government Relations Role and Strategy in Improving the Quality of Public Information in Sidoarjo?

This study aims to analyze and describe 1 ) the role of government and public relations strategy in improving the quality of public information , 2 ) the quality of public information , 3 ) the role and influence of public relations strategy on the quality of public information services in Sidoarjo.

## **2 . Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1 Public Relations Role and Strategy**

According to Cutlip H. Center and Broom (2007 ) , Public Relations is a function of management for establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and the public which determine the success or failure of the organization. Sumartias ( 2010:34 ) stated that besides being central government information services and communication between organizations/institutions with the public or community, the primary function of public relations is to be custodian and manager of imaging and positive reputation in the eyes of the public institutions.

Ruslan ( 2010:26 ) asserted that the role of PR ( Public Relations ) includes: Communicator, Relationship, Back Up Management, Good image maker . As communicators, public relations must have the ability to manage information messages either directly (spoken person) or through printed/ electronic media. PR should also be able to act as a mediator and persuader. As public communicators, government public relations should secure the policy of institution, provide services and disseminate information to the public about the institution's policies and work programs. In this case, the government public relations is required to pack the agenda of agency policy setting to be presented to and accepted by the public media. ( <http://www.setkab.go.id/artikel-6357-.html> , accessed January 30, 2013 ) .

The ability of public relations in building positive relationships with institutions which are represented both internally and externally is very helpful in the creation of mutual understanding, trust, support, cooperation and tolerance among the public institutions. The next role is to implement Back Up Management. Backing up the management means doing promotion, marketing, operational personnel, and many more to achieve a common goal within a framework of basic organizational goals.

Creating a positive image or publicity (good image maker) is an achievement, reputation and ultimate goals of public relations activities in performing public relations management and developing reputation or image-building of the institution/organization and product represented.

According to Adnanputra ( in Ruslan 2008) the strategy is an integral part of a plan. While the plan is the product of a planning which means it is one of the basic functions of the management process. PR communication strategy according to Cutlip (2007 ) are better known as " 7 - Cs PR Communications." The PR Communications strategies are as follows :

- a. Credibility: The communication starts from the atmosphere of trust that was created by the communicator in earnest to serve the public who have confidence and respect.
- b. Context: It is related to the environment of social life, a message that should be conveyed clearly and participatory attitude. Effective communication is necessary to support the social environment through reports in the mass media.
- c. Content: The message should concern the interests of the people/public so that information can be received as something beneficial for society in general.
- d. Clarity ( Clarity ) : Messages must be arranged with clear words, easy to understand, and have a common understanding between the communicator and the communicant in terms of purpose, theme, and goals of all parties.
- e. Continuity and Consistency ( Continuity and Consistency): Communication is a process that never ends, because it is done repeatedly with a variety of messages. It is intended to facilitate the learning process, persuade in which the theme of the message must be consistent.
- f. Channel ( Channel ). Using the right and reliable channels of information media which are also selected by the audience as the target. The use of different media channels will result different effect.
- g. Capability of the Audience ( Audience Capability ). Taking into account the capabilities of the audience. Communication can be effective for people when it comes to factors such as useful habits, reading skills improvement and knowledge development.

### **2.2 The Quality of Public Information**

Public Information in the Law No. 14/2008 on Public Information disclosure is generated, managed, shipped,

and received by a public agency with regard to the organizers and the management of a public agency in accordance with the Freedom of Information Law No.14/2008 related to public interests. There are five types of public information that must be provided by public agencies such as 1 ) regular information , 2 ) immediate information , 3 ) anytime information, 4 ) excluded information, 5 ) requested information

Regular information is information delivered routinely and regularly in a certain period of time. This type of information includes information related to the existence of a public agency, performance, financial statements and other information linked to the activities of public agency.

Immediate Information is information that is immediately or spontaneously delivered. This type of information includes information that can threaten the lives of many people and public order concerns. Among such information are information on natural disasters, information about the status of non - natural disasters such as industrial or technological failures, the impact of industrial, nuclear explosion, environmental pollution, space activities, social disasters such as social unrest, social conflict between groups or between communities and terror, information about the type, distribution and area as the source of a potentially infectious disease, information about toxins in food that are consumed by the public, and information on the proposed disruption of public utilities.

Anytime information is the information presented at any time by a public agency. This type of information includes the list of all public information that is under the control of the public agency, excluding exempt information; outcome decisions and deliberations of public agencies; entire existing policies and supporting documents; project work plan including the estimated annual expenditure of public agencies; public agencies agreement with the third party, information and policy said publicly in a meeting by public officer; working procedures of public agency employees related to public services, and statements regarding public access to information services as stipulated in the Law.

Excluded information is information that is not accessible to the applicant of public information because it is confidential, may harm the state, inhibit the process of law enforcement, reveal Indonesia's natural resources, information which may harm the national security, harm the interests of foreign relations, and other information that are based on Law.

Requested information is information beyond the above four types. To get information on the basis of demand, the mechanism must follow the rules in Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information.

Quality information, according to O'Briens, as quoted by Abadi (2013) is the information that has the characteristics, attributes, or qualities that make information more valuable. Information attribute can be seen from three-dimensional, namely time, content, and form. Time dimension has several characteristics that can be used as a measurement of the quality of information, namely 1) punctuation, 2) contemporary, 3) frequency, and 4) time period. Dimension of content includes 1) the accuracy, 2) relevance, 3) completeness, 4) brevity, 5) coverage, and 6) performance. While the form dimension can be seen as 1) clarity, 2) detail, 3) sequence, 4) presentation, and the last is 5) media.

Based on the theory, conceptual framework of the Role and Strategy of Government Public Relations in Improving the Quality of Public Information in Sidoarjo is depicted in Figure 1 below:

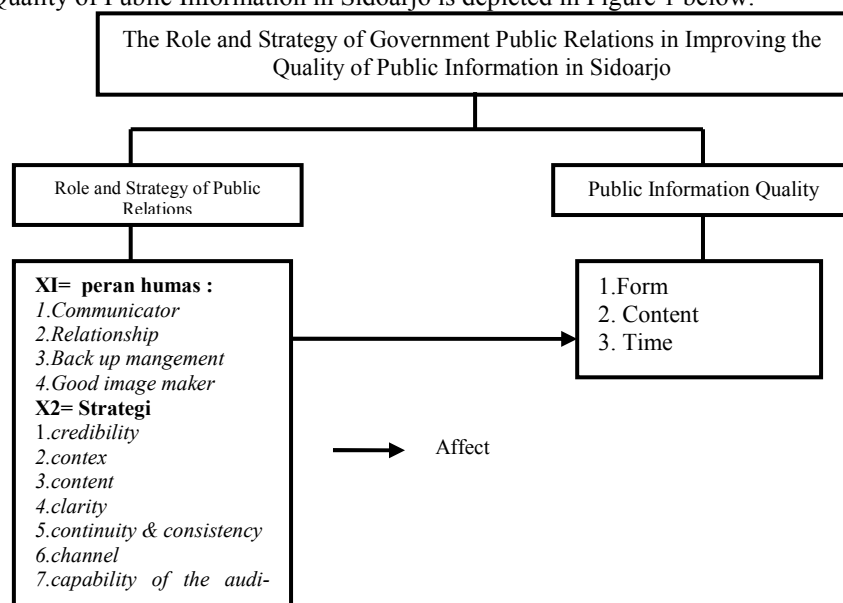


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The hypothesis of this study is :

"The role and strategy of public relations simultaneously and partially affect the quality of public information"

- a. the role of public relations has positive effect on the quality of public information
- b. public relations strategy positively affects the quality of public information.

### 3. Research Method

This explanative study was conducted in Sidoarjo with a sample of 103 respondents . The respondents were government employees in Sidoarjo . The reason behind the use of local government officials as respondents is because the quality starts from their own internal organization which will promote the establishment of employee satisfaction on existing information and ultimately create a quality that can be measured and assessed externally by the public. By using simple random sampling techniques, data collection was done through the distribution of questionnaires. Questionnaires were prepared using a Likert scale consisting of five alternative answers.

Analyzing techniques used are quantitative description and Multiple Regression. Multiple regression is used to determine the effect of role variable ( X1 ) and public relations strategy ( X2 ) on the quality of public information ( Y ). To test the hypothesis, the F test and T test were used. F test was used to test the X1 and X2 variables at the same time (simultaneously ) toward variable Y. While the T test is used to test each variable partially toward variable Y.

### 4 . Findings

#### 4.1 The Quality of Public Information.

The quality of public information is public information standard rapprochement which continues to apply. The quality of information can be viewed from the aspect of form, content, and time (O'Brians , 2005 in Abadi, 2013). From the aspect of form, quality information can be seen from the indicators: 1 ) clarity of information available, 2 ) detail and brevity , 3 ) a predetermined sequence , 4 ) presentation in the form of narrative , numeric , or graphic , 5 ) media used in the form of printed, video display, CD, as well as soft copy. The quality of information from the aspect of form is still at 40.1%.

The second aspect of the quality information is content . In terms of content, the quality of information can be seen from indicators such as 1) accuracy , 2) the relevance of the available information to the needs of the recipient for a particular situation, 3) the completeness of the information available , 4 ) information brevity , 5 ) the scope of information both internally - externally or narrow - broad, and 6 ) information indicating performance or completion of the activities carried out by the organization. The quality of information as seen from the content is 41 %.

Information quality can also be viewed from the aspect of time . From the aspect of time, the quality of public information in Sidoarjo is still at 39.9 % . Indicators used were 1 ) punctuation in obtaining information when needed, 2 ) the novelty of the available information , 3 ) the frequency of the information provided , 4 ) periods of time namely the availability of past, present, and future information. In general, the quality of public information in Sidoarjo is considered as fairly good, which is 65.5%.

Table 1: Public Information

No	Public Information	%
1.	Regular information	35.8 %
2.	Immediate Information	39.8 %
3.	Anytime Information	39.6 %
4.	Requested Informa-tion	41.3 %

Table 2: Quality of information

No	Information Quality	%
1.	Time	39.9 %
2.	Content	41.0 %
3.	Form	40.1 %

Table 1 shows that public information provided by public relations include: periodic information 38.5%, Immediate information 39.8%, anytime information by 39.6%, and Requested information by 42%.

#### 4.2 Public Relations Role and Strategy

Protocol and Public Relations Division in Sidoarjo has the task of organizing affairs and news information, complaints management, protocol and documentation. In addition to these duties, public relations is also ex-officio of Records and Information Management Officer (PPID). Theoretically, the role of public relations in this study refers to the opinion of Ruslan (2010), namely 1) as communicators, 2) running the relationship, 3) backing up management, 4) good image maker.

The role of public relations as a communicator that conveys a message or information is of 43.5%, public relations relationship with internal and external public is of 44.4%. As an ex-officio of PPID, the role of public relations in backing up management is still at 41.1%. Backing up the management is in the form of 1) planning, implementing, coordinating and controlling the collection of information, classification of information, records and information services information from PPID; 2) storage, records, supply and provision of information services to the public; 3) processing and classification of information and documentation systematically based on the roles, responsibilities and functions of the organization as well as the categories of information; 4) and implementation of complaints advocacy and resolution of public information dispute. Public relations role as Good image maker in developing a positive image to local government in Sidoarjo is 42%. Overall role of protocol and public relations in performing the duties and functions works really well, which is equal to 79.18%.

Table 3: The Role of Public Relations in Public Information Services

No	Public Relations Roles	%
1.	<i>Communicator</i>	43,5 %
2.	<i>Relationship</i>	44,4 %
3.	<i>Back Up Management</i>	41,1 %
4.	<i>Good Image Maker</i>	42 %

Public relations strategy is an outline of strategic actions taken in a certain time ahead to achieve goals more effectively. Cutlip (2007) explained that public relations communication strategy consists of a 7-Cs, namely credibility, social environment, content, clarity, continuity and consistence, channel, and audience capability.

Table 4: Public Relations Strategy in Public Information Services

No	Public Relations Strategy	%
1.	Credibility	28,7 %
2.	Social Environment	42,8 %
3.	Content	44,1 %
4.	Clarity	42,2 %
5.	Continuity and consistence	42,1 %
6.	Channel	42,4 %
7.	Audience capability	41,6 %

The atmosphere of mutual trust conditioned by public relations as a communicator is a public relations strategy to increase credibility in public. Confidence and respect of respondents to the credibility of the government public relations in Sidoarjo is 28.7%. Effective communication done by public relations through news in various media with a social environment is 42.8%. Public relations capability in presenting the message contents to be generally acceptable and beneficial to the community is of 44.1%. The messages must be clear (clarity), easy to understand, and have a common understanding between the communicator and the communicant in terms of purpose, theme, and goals of all parties. Clarity of words presented by the Public Relations is of 42.2%. The delivery of the communication messages is done repeatedly with a variety of messages, is of 42.1%. Selection of channels of information media that is used to reach audience as the target also needs to be addressed. The use of different media channels will also result different effects. The medium used to convey information can be in the form of website (36.2%) and printed media (38.76%) such as daily media and leaflet/brochure. The use of media channels to convey information to the public is of 42.4%. Finally, capability of the community itself needs to get attention. Capability of public in accessing information is still at 41.6%. Overall, public relations communication strategy used to improve the quality of information is considered as good, that is of 80.3%.

Government Public Relations of Sidoarjo has a very important role in the dissemination and communication of public information. Therefore, the communication strategy used to increase the public information becomes much more important. The results indicate that the role of public relations and strategy used to increase the quality of public information services is of 71%, with R coefficient of 0.846 (Table 5). Meanwhile, 29% are influenced by other factors that are not part of this research.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.846 <sup>a</sup>	.716	.710	4.33394

a. Predictors: (Constant), public relations strategy, the role of public relations

Test results of the hypothesis indicate that the role of the variable (X1) and public relations strategy (X2) simultaneously and partially affect the quality of public information. Simultaneously, Table 6 ANOVA - F Test shows significance value of F which is smaller than  $\alpha$  significance (sig. F 0,000 < 0.05 sig  $\alpha$ ). Partially, t test also shows that the role of public relations has positive effect on the quality of public information. T significance

value in Table 7 shows the rate of 0.004, which is smaller than the significance  $\alpha$  of 0.05. This is also the case with public relations strategy that affects positively on the quality of information, which is of significance t value (0.000) is smaller than the significance  $\alpha$  (0,05).

Table 6: F test - ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	4827.522	2	2413.761	128.508	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	1915.869	102	18.783		
Total	6743.390	104			

a. Predictors: (Constant), PR strategy, PR role

b. Dependent Variable: Information Quality

Table 7: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.169	3.339		.650	.517
	PR role	.185	.063	.213	2.955	.004
	PR strategy	.413	.043	.687	9.534	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Information Quality

Table 7 shows that the regression coefficient of public relations role is of 0.185 . This means that every 1 % increase in the quality of PR role, public information will also be increased by 18.5 % with the assumption that public relations strategy and quality of information in a constant state . this is also the case with the regression coefficient strategy done by public relations in improving the quality of information that indicates a score of 0.413. The score stated that every 1 % addition (due to positive sign) , public relations strategy will improve the quality of public information of 41.3 % with the assumption that the role and quality of information are in constant conditions .

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1 Conclusions

Based on the research findings, there are several conclusions:

- 1) PR has a significant role in improving the quality of public information, whether as a communicator, developing relationships with staff and officials in the government and public environment in Sidoarjo, backing up ex-officio PPID (Records and Information Management Officer) management, and performing the positive imaging of government organizations in Sidoarjo. Even the Public relations strategy used to increase the quality of information the public has a very significant meaning. The role and strategy of public relations undertaken to improve the quality of information is of 79.18 % and 80.3 %.
- 2) The quality of public information that is managed by PR as ex – officio of PPID is of 65.5 %.
- 3 ) The role and strategy carried out by public relations have a positive and significant effect on the quality of public information. Magnitude of the role and strategy of public relations toward the quality of public information is of 71 % with R coefficient of 0.846. The more enhanced the role and strategy done in the management of quality public information, the greater the improvement in the quality of information.

### 5.2 Implications of Research

#### 5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

- 1) The findings of this study support the notion of some communication experts like Uchtjana (2008 ) , Cutlip (2007 ) , and Ruslan ( 2010) that the communication activities in an organization can take place reciprocally. Public relations has a role as communicators to develop a harmonious relationship not only with individuals within the organization but also with the public. In addition, public relations also play a role in building and developing a positive image of the organization as well as backing up quality management of information. This study also strengthens the role of public relations delivered by Sumartias (2010) that PR can serve as a center of information services, communication between agencies and the public.
- 2) Public relations strategy used in this study, as presented in Cutlip (2007), namely 7Cs can be used for improving the quality of public information.
- 3) The findings also reinforce dimensions of the quality of information as stated by O'Briens which includes the

form, content, and time. Theoretically, if the quality of public information in the internal organization is good, the quality of public information by the public perception must be good.

### 5.2.2 Practical Implications

The roles of public relations as a communicator, relationship builder, back up management (ex - officio of PPID), and organization image maker, need to be improved in maximally, particularly with regard to public disclosure. This is also the case with public relations communication strategy used which needs to be improved. The findings prove that the quality of public information in the internal area of Sidoarjo government is categorized as fairly good. When role and public relations strategy are improved, the quality of public information will also be improved.

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